

## DECISION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** COMMISSIONER KJELLANDER  
COMMISSIONER RAPER  
COMMISSIONER ANDERSON  
COMMISSION SECRETARY  
COMMISSION STAFF

**FROM:** DON HOWELL  
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

**DATE:** APRIL 29, 2016

**SUBJECT:** STAFF APPLICATION FOR AN ORDER APPROVING THE  
DISTRIBUTION OF TIER 2 QPAP FUNDS, CASE NO. GNR-T-16-04

On April 27, 2016, Commission Staff filed an Application requesting that the Commission authorize the disbursement of the remaining balance of Tier 2 funds accumulated under the Qwest Performance Assurance Plan (QPAP). Section 271 of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 established procedures for Bell Operating Companies (such as Qwest's predecessor U S WEST) to obtain authorization from the Federal Communications Commission before providing in-region interLATA and interstate telecommunications services. 47 U.S.C. § 271; Application at 1-2. If Qwest failed to meet the various performance standards set out in its QPAP, the plan required that Qwest make remedial payments to either the affected local exchange carrier or to a fund established by the state commission. Payments to the Tier 2 accounts were discontinued in November 2010 per Order No. 32106.

Given the discontinuance of the Tier 2 payments, Staff believes it is now appropriate to disburse the funds. The current balance of the consolidated Tier 2 QPAP accounts is \$89,710.56 as of April 1, 2016. Staff recommends that the funds be disbursed to the two telecommunications programs identified below. Staff further recommends that the Application be processed under Modified Procedure.

### THE APPLICATION

#### *A. Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline*

The first program recommended to receive a portion of the Tier 2 funds is the Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline administered by the Department of Health & Welfare, Division of Behavioral Health. According to statistics from the Suicide Prevention Action Network of

Idaho, suicide is the second leading cause of death for Idahoans aged 15-34. Application at 3 (footnote omitted). The Department of Health & Welfare has also identified four special at-risk groups in Idaho. The first of these at-risk groups for suicide is male teenagers between the ages of 15 and 17 years old. *Id.* (footnote omitted).

To address this priority at-risk group, the Suicide Prevention Hotline proposes to launch a new telecommunications service called “Texts for Life” to reach people who are more comfortable texting or using on-line chat services. The new service would focus on increasing “support for youth and other groups who favor these technologies, such as veterans.” *Id.* at 4. The Division of Behavioral Health has proposed to utilize approximately \$44,900 of QPAP funds to procure the following equipment and facilities to implement this program:

1. \$18,000 to build and equip six additional workstations with telephones, computers, power-jack wiring.
2. \$6,000 to improve acoustic dampening between and among the existing responder workstations and the new workstations.
3. \$4,000 for two LED wall displays showing the waiting queue for calls and texts.
4. \$4,000 for ICAROL IT software to provide crisis texts & chat functionality and voice-call management for one year.
5. \$5,000 for access and security systems.
6. \$7,900 for office supplies, other equipment, and administrative management.

Application at 4; Exh. 1.

### ***B. Idaho Emergency Communications Standards***

The second program recommended by Staff is based upon a proposal from the Idaho Emergency Communications Commission (IECC). This program would utilize approximately \$44,910 of QPAP funding to develop employment, training, and certification standards for emergency dispatchers located at public safety call centers (911 centers). *Id.* at 4. The POST Academy has a voluntary dispatcher training program. Application at 5. The IECC proposes to use the QPAP funds to develop the curriculum and standards for a mandatory certification and recertification program at the Police Officer Standards & Training (POST) Academy at about \$10,000 per year. “Utilizing available QPAP funds would provide the necessary funding for

approximately four years while other funding solutions are identified.” *Id.* If approved, funding would be transferred to the IECC and eventually to the POST Academy. Exh. 2.

Staff believes that the available QPAP funds can be put to good use by these two programs. Staff believes that these communications programs are competitively and technologically neutral, do not favor any telecommunications carrier, and are in the public interest. Staff recommends the Commission process this case under Modified Procedure and suggests a 21-day comment period and 7-day reply period by Staff, if necessary.

### COMMISSION DECISION

Does the Commission wish to issue a Notice of Application and Notice of Modified Procedure regarding Staff’s Application for an Order approving the disbursement of the remaining balance of the QPAP funds to these two proposals?

Does the Commission wish to set a 21-day comment period and a 7-day reply period?

Anything else?



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Don Howell  
Deputy Attorney General

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